

REMARKS

The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated May 24, 2005. Claims 12-15 and 23-40 were previously withdrawn from consideration. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's statement that claims 8 and 20 contain allowable subject matter. Claims 1-6 and 8-40 remain pending in the application.

As previously noted by the Examiner, upon the allowance of a generic claim, Applicants will be entitled to consideration of claims to additional species which are written in dependent form or otherwise include all the limitations of an allowed generic claim as provided by 37 C.F.R. § 1.141. As acknowledged by the Examiner, claims 1 and 16 are generic. Accordingly, upon the allowance of either generic claim 1 or 16, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner consider claims to non-elected species (i.e., claims 12-15 and 23-40).

Applicants respectfully direct the Examiner's attention to the fact that the Attorney Docket Number was changed to M4065.0802/P802 along with the Revocation of Power of Attorney and New Power of Attorney submitted on January 31, 2003. It is requested that all future correspondence contain this new Attorney Docket Number.

Claims 1-6, 9-11, 16-19, and 21-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Zhou et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,965,871). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request reconsideration.

Claim 1, recites, *inter alia*, “[a] method of processing pixel levels, ... comprising: clamping a pixel readout line to a voltage level less than a voltage corresponding to a pixel signal.” (Emphasis added.) Claims 16 and 22 recite, *inter alia*, “[a]n imager comprising: a pixel readout line; a ... pixel sensor ...; and a controller

configured to provide control signals to cause the pixel readout line to be clamped to a voltage level less than a voltage corresponding to a signal sensed by the sensor.” (Emphasis added.) Zhou et al. does not disclose these limitations of claims 1, 16, and 22.

While the Office Action points to Zhou et al., an Col. 5, ln. 32-36, as disclosing those limitations of claims 1, 16, and 22, such disclosure is absent from Zhou et al. To the contrary, Zhou et al. discloses “[w]hen reset transistor 38 is turned ON by the application of a RESET signal to gate 41, sensing node 36 is clamped to VDD which exerts a reverse bias on photo-diode 34 to induce the depletion.” Col. 5, ln. 32-36 (emphasis added). The sensing node 36 is not equivalent to the “pixel readout line” of claims 1, 16, and 22. Further, even if it were equivalent, which it is not, it is not clamped to “a voltage less than a voltage corresponding to a pixel signal” or “a voltage less than a voltage corresponding to a signal sensed by the sensor” as recited in claims 1, 16, and 22.

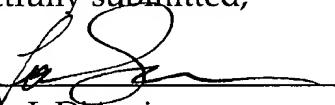
The Office Action states also points to Zhou et al. as disclosing an APS being clamped by being reset, however, there is no disclosure whatsoever in Zhou et al. to clamp a pixel output line to any voltage, much less to a “voltage level less than a voltage corresponding to a pixel signal,” as recited in claims 1, 16, and 22. At least for these reasons, claims 1, 16, and 22 are allowable over Zhou et al.

Claims 2-6, 9-11, 17-19, and 21 depend from claims 1 and 16 and are allowable over Zhou et al. at least for the reasons mentioned above, and also because Zhou et al. fails to teach or suggest the respective inventive combinations defined by claims 2-6, 9-11, 17-19, and 21.

In view of the above, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

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